

August 2016
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News from the Coastal North Carolina National Wildlife Refuges Complex

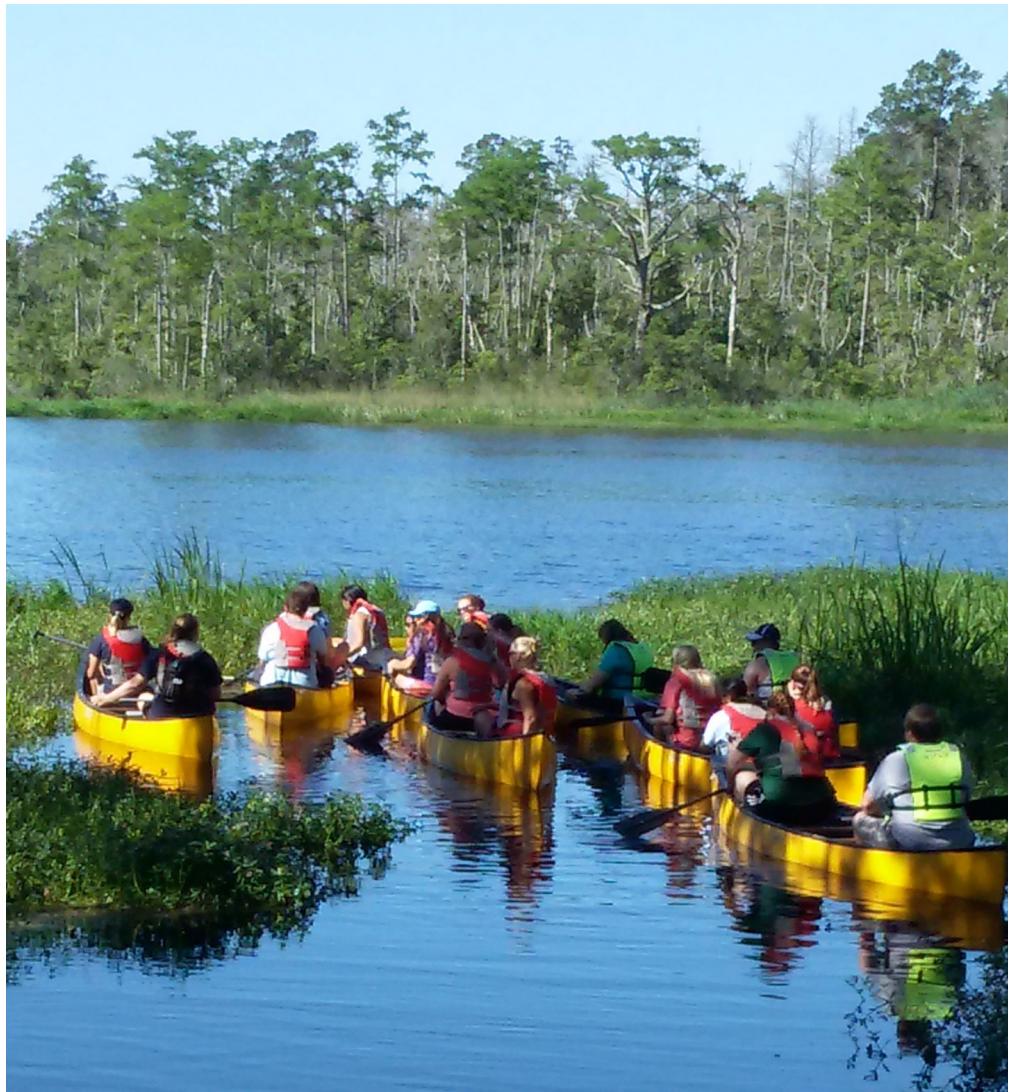
Alligator River, Pea Island, Pocosin Lakes,
Roanoke River, Mackay Island, and Currituck

Summer Programs are Underway!

Summertime brings warmer weather and lots of visitors to the Outer Banks. The interns and other volunteers are busy with all sorts of activities which include leading a variety of programs at Alligator River and Pea Island Refuges. Summer programs run until the end of August, and there are plenty of programs offered year-round. For information on Refuge programs, see the schedule on the last page of the newsletter or visit <https://www.fws.gov/ncgatewayvc/spec.html>.



Audrey of the Preschool Young Naturalist Program got into character as a dragonfly on the trail behind the visitor center! Credit: USFWS



Credit: USFWS

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Annabelle and Harper Goldberg with their “build-a-bird” creations at Pea Island Refuge. Credit: USFWS/Calvo



Did you know that Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge is on the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway? The Byway begins on NC Highway 12 at the entrance to Cape Hatteras National Seashore. Signs have recently been installed all along the Byway. Information can be found along the way or by visiting <http://outerbanksbyway.com/>. Credit: USFWS

Summer Programs are Underway!



Credit: USFWS



Volunteer Audrey Whitlock shares her expertise and love of birds during a bird walk at Pea Island Refuge. Credit: USFWS

In Memory of Chris Lucash Red Wolf Biologist

Shared by Becky Harrison
Supervisory Wildlife Biologist
June 6, 2016

Friends and Colleagues,

It is with a heavy heart that I share that our friend and colleague, Chris Lucash, left this world early Saturday morning. Just one year ago, he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS; also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease). Fifty-four years young, he is gone too soon due to this debilitating disease. Alisa and their children Amie, Noah, and Eden together with many friends and family members honored him in a service yesterday at their home in Pittsboro, North Carolina.

Born in Illinois, Chris was always an avid outdoorsman and grew up with a deep connection with nature.

Farmer; gardener; hunter; beekeeper; philosopher; wanderer; and earth advocate, he was simultaneously the student and teacher.

A constant tinkerer, he would salvage the smallest piece of scrap to create, refurbish, or just simply save for some yet to be determined project.

Chris started with the Fish and Wildlife Service nearly 30 years ago first working at Alligator River NWR and dedicated his career to the conservation and recovery of red wolves. In 1986, he arrived in sync with the wolves just before reintroduction efforts began. He then led efforts to establish a second restoration site in the Great Smoky Mountains in the mid-1990s, where he met his wife Alisa. When the project ended in Tennessee, he returned to North Carolina as a senior biologist with the red wolf recovery program.



In many ways, Chris was like a red wolf himself—rare, fiercely loyal, inspiring, resilient, wild, and completely unique. Deeply dedicated, compassionate, and stubborn as hell, he was their (and our) persistent advocate. Our community has benefited much from his insights and navigation of field techniques, challenges, and partnerships.

His legacy will continue to impact many through “Staring Down Fate,” a documentary film about his life work and battle with ALS being developed by his friend and colleague, Jeff Mittelstadt of WildSides. Trailers are available online and Chris wrote several journal entries sharing his thoughts on the creation process.

We will miss the mischievous sparkle in his eyes, his explosive smile, his wit, his soulful musings, and his endless passion.

While his pack and all the wild ones grieve his absence, we are better for bearing witness to his light and are grateful he is now running free.

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society's Bookstores Help Support Refuges' Missions

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society offers a wide variety of items at its four bookstores. Many items are sold exclusively at the individual stores while others are offered at all stores. Please consider purchasing your next gift for a loved one or yourself at one of the bookstores.



Welcome Mary Grindlay

You may have noticed a new smiling face at one of the four refuge bookstores over the past few months. Mary Grindlay is the new bookstore manager and Wildlife Art Expo coordinator. She replaces Tammy Batschelet who has moved on to become a Children's Librarian for Dare County. To reach Mary about the bookstores or Art Expo, call 252/473 1132 ext. 226 or Mary_Grindlay@fws.gov. Credit: USFWS

Above right: Mattamuskeet Bookstore Open 9-4 seven days a week. Credit: USFWS

Below right: Pea Island Bookstore - Open 9-4 seven days a week. Credit: USFWS



Pocosin Lakes Bookstore - Open 9-4 every day except Wednesday. Credit: USFWS



National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center Open 9-4 Monday through Saturday; Noon-4 Sunday. Credit: USFWS

Support Your National Wildlife Refuges

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society exists to support the interpretive, educational and volunteer programs of several national wildlife refuges, with a focus on Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges. Your contributions to the Society help make it possible to provide that assistance.

The Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society supports for local K-12 schools by providing educational programs, as well as transportation grants for students and teachers to visit the refuges and National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center.

Donations and fees also help maintain refuge ground and water trails, pay for refuge visitor services staff, assist with the annual *Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival*, and support dozens of other refuge programs and projects.

Please support your national wildlife refuges by donating \$10, \$50, \$100 or more. You may send check or money order to

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society
P.O. Box 1808
Manteo, NC 27954

Or, to use your credit card, you may call or go online: 252/473 9464 or <http://www.coastalwildliferefuge.com/>

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Tax ID #56-1649348. Your contribution may be deductible as a charitable contribution on your federal taxes. We will send you a receipt for each contribution, as well as a Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society membership card to print and cut out to use for savings in our refuge gift shops.

Wings

Alligator River/Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges
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100 Conservation Way (physical)
Manteo, NC 27954

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E-mail: alligatorriver@fws.gov
http://www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator_river/

Follow us on Facebook:
Friends of Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges and USFWS North Carolina



New Artists Featured at Summer Wildlife Art Expo Reception

The opening reception for the Summer Wildlife Art Expo was held June 17. The reception provided viewers a chance to meet the artists and enjoy beautifully presented snacks. The artwork will be on display for the rest of the summer. Artists for the summer show include:

Jeff Lewis - Photography

Pam Pounce - Watercolor, Ink, Etching and Gouache

Lee Gerry Wertheimer - Watercolor, Ink

Ann May - Gouache, Etching

Patricia Isenhour - Acrylic Painting, Silhouette with Collage

Gale Flax - Scratchboard

Ray Hershberger - Oil on Canvas

Nikki Webb - Drypoint with Mixed Media, Watercolor, Pen and Ink

Nancy Laird - Photography



Credit: USFWS

2016 Wings Over Water Registration is Open

Submitted by Steve Brumfield, Visitor Services Specialist

The 2016 Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival is set to be a great event. Keynote speaker Kenn Kaufman is a nationally known birder, artist, and author (Kaufman Nature Series). Kenn will also be leading two birding trips during the festival: Beginning Birding at Bodie Island and Oregon Inlet and Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge Tram Tour-Birding & Wildlife. These programs have limited space, so register now to make sure you have a place.

The Festival has over 90 great trips, tours, and classes sure to appeal to everyone. Programs include birding, art, natural history, photography, and paddling.

Here is a partial list of birding trips that currently have space (this can change quickly):

Birding 101

Birding Pea Island North Pond by Van
Birding Portsmouth Island

Birding the Northern Banks-Corolla to Duck

Bodie Island Lighthouse Birding

Cape Hatteras Birding

e-Bird Workshop

Hummingbird Banding

Intermediate/Advanced North Pond
Birding

Maritime Forest Kayak Birding Tour
(Kitty Hawk Woods)

Ocean-watching at Jennette's Pier for
both Casual and Experienced Birders

Ocracoke Island Birding

Oregon Inlet Marsh Birding

Oregon Inlet Old Coast Guard Station
Birding

Purple Martin 101

Roanoke Island Birding and

Shorebirds & Waders

Great photography programs are
available, too. Photographer Mark
Buckler leads two programs: Sunrise
Photography and Bird Photography.

Tyler Jackson teaches Beginning
DSLR Video Class for those who want
to learn the basics of the video option
on their cameras, and Introduction to
Photography, a great way to learn the
many functions and understand the
potential of your camera.

Kenn Kaufman Provides the Design - 2016 Wings Over Water Products

This year we have three new *Wings Over Water* products available in our Refuge bookstores. Our 2016 keynote speaker, Kenn Kaufman, has provided beautiful artwork featuring a tricolored heron. The items include a t-shirt, magnet, and pocket notebook.

If you're in the area, stop by the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge Bookstore or National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center Bookstore on Roanoke Island to make your purchase. Or, if you're not able to visit before the Festival, your order can be shipped to you. Contact Bookstore Manager Mary Grindlay 252/473 1132 X 226 mary_grindlay@fws.gov

Each bookstore also has a full-stock of Kenn Kaufman books - Kaufman nature field guides to birds, insects, and mammals and his autobiographical books about growing up birding, *Kingbird Highway* and *Flights Against the Sunset*. Buy your copies ahead of time to read and use in the field. Get them signed by the author during Wings Over Water in October.

Signed books make great gifts!



A Great Way to Memorialize a Loved One

Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society is purchasing new deck furniture for the back deck of the National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center on Roanoke Island. The current plan includes two 42" diameter round tables (we may add one more, if space allows), three two-tiered side tables, and 18 deck chairs. The Society is looking for sponsors for each of these pieces.

Each piece may host a memorial, honor, or courtesy plaque to acknowledge a loved one or your personal donation.

The above photo shows the three pieces we plan to purchase. The furniture is made of recycled plastic composite and should last 20+ years.

Daniels Home Port is starting us off by donating the first 42" Round Table!

Sponsorships:

Single Chair: \$400
42" Round Table: \$500
Two-tiered Side Table: \$200

We will have details on plaque text soon. For more information, please contact Steve Brumfield steven_brumfield@fws.gov 252/473 1132 X 224

The sponsor fee includes both the cost of the furniture and the plaque.



Left to right: Wings Over Water magnet, pocket notebook and t-shirts by our 2016 keynote speaker Kenn Kaufman.



Maintenance and Fire Crew Getting the Job Done in the Complex

While riding around the refuges, you may encounter workers doing a number of jobs to help make the refuges a better home for wildlife and safer for visitors. Please remember that if you are on a road being used by staff or volunteers operating heavy or light equipment, slow down and make sure the driver can see you. Many times they will signal you to pass safely.



Maintenance Mechanic Jon Powers used the blade of a bulldozer to cut away dirt from a deteriorated road on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge. Next, he filled holes with sand, and pulled dirt back to shape it for travel. Credit USFWS/Van Druten



On sections of Pocosin Lakes Refuge that are managed for waterfowl, equipment operators remove trees so grasses and other small seed-producing plants can grow. Left to nature, most habitats would eventually become forests, which are not productive feeding areas for waterfowl. By removing the trees, we are allowing the “duck, goose, and swan food” to grow. We sometimes use prescribed fire to open up areas for grasses, as well. Credit USFWS/Elaine Barr

Congratulations to Our Biologist Kris Fair



Refuge Biologist Kris Fair (right) was recently presented a plaque as recognition for completing 20 years of service with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Kris is shown here with new Supervisory Wildlife Biologist Becky Harrison.



New Trails are Coming

The short nature trail that loops through the woods behind the Visitor Center is well-worn, and lots of folks have asked us to consider adding more walking trails on our 35-acre plot. So, we’ve contacted neighbors (on the side where we actually have neighbors) to meet and greet and share our plans. We’re not removing any live trees, and we’re only downing dead trees if they present a safety hazard. But, wait until you see these awesome trails! We’ll get a release out when they’re open and ready for you to walk. (Key word there is WALK – these trails are not open for horseback riding, bicycles, or motorized vehicles.) And, we’ll try them out first with “pets allowed.” But, if pets become an issue, we’ll have to reconsider! So be sure to pick up after your pets and keep them leashed at all times.

USFWS Teamwork Makes Mattamuskeet Refuge Safer for People

Mattamuskeet National Wildlife Refuge hosted a USFWS Maintenance Action Team project during the weeks of April 18-28 to address safety concerns on three bridges that provide access to both the public and refuge staff. Regional “MAT” Coordinator David McCaghren and Maintenance Worker Shane Watson of Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge joined the Mattamuskeet staff and volunteers to complete these projects.

During the first week, the Lake Landing parking and fishing areas were closed to the public while Refuge staff worked on demolishing and repairing/replacing the wooden bridges crossing the canal. These areas are popular crabbing spots, are heavily used, and were unsafe. The Refuge repaired the wooden bridge crossing Lake Landing canal from the parking area. New decking was installed on this bridge which will allow for safer crossing by refuge staff and visitors.

In addition, the work crew demolished the old wooden bridge adjacent to the Lake Landing flap gate structure. The bridge was in major disrepair and had become a safety hazard. This bridge had been closed to fishing since 2015 due to its condition.

The second week, the main Refuge Entrance Road and Wildlife Drive were closed to the public while the team worked on the metal bridge to prepare it for the installation of catwalks on both sides. This will address safety concerns and enhance fishing opportunities for the public. This bridge is a popular fishing spot for many, but being a single lane bridge and open to vehicles, it created safety concerns. The new catwalks will allow the public to have a safe area to fish off the main roadway and will be installed at a future date when they are delivered from the manufacturer.

Deputy Refuge Manager Keith Ramos was pleased to have assistance and teamwork to get these projects done. “These projects are just a few examples of the many ways USFWS employees work together to make refuges better places for people, as well as wildlife!”



Before and after the Lake Landing bridge projects. Credit USFWS/Keith Ramos

Milltail Creek Paddling Trail Being Cleared of Alligator Weed

Volunteer George Harrison and Intern Rachel Grether recently spent the day on the Paddling Trail spraying alligator weed as part of the process of eradicating the pesky plant. This plant has been growing very fast and clogging up the Trail in many spots making it difficult for kayak and canoe enthusiasts to navigate the Trail.



Credit: USFWS

Upon recent inspection, much of the plant has died back. As a reminder, if you use the Trail and come across a fallen tree or other debris that impedes your journey, please contact

Steve Brumfield
steven_brumfield@fws.gov or
252/473 1132 X 224

The Milltail Creek Paddling Trail is located at the south end of Buffalo City Road on Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge and is open during daylight hours.

Where Are They Now?

Submitted by Cindy Heffley
Visitor Services Specialist

Soon after I started working at the refuges, I made it a point to keep up with interns as they moved on to other adventures. Most interns are general interns, gaining experience in most of our program areas. We also have a Red Wolf Caretaker Intern year-round. At various times, we've had specialized interns working on climate adaptation, Black Bear surveys relating to the eventual widening of Highway 64, and the Fire Program.

This is the second in a series catching up with some of the former interns to see where they are and what they have been doing since leaving our area. I'm proud of the professional and personal accomplishments these young folks have made! Some have gotten married (or were already married) and have new additions to their families. Future interns perhaps?



Hollie (Warren) Hardison

Hollie is a former Pea Island intern and is currently the Director of the Planetarium Health and Science Museum of the Neuseway Nature Park, North Carolina. She and her husband Trey have two children, Hope and Hoyt.



Ashlyn (Knight) Spartenburg

Ashlyn is a former Red Wolf Caretaker intern and is currently a science teacher and farm manager at Omni Montessori School in Waxhaw, NC. She and her husband Brannnon have a son, Nolan.



Cody Stone

Cody is a former Pea Island intern and is currently a Conservation Technician for the NC Wildlife Resources Commission stationed in New Bern, NC but working all over the Central Coast. He and his wife Mandi have a daughter, Zoey.



Marson Nance

Marson is a former Climate Adaptation intern and is currently working for Orange County, FL Department of Environmental Protection as a lake manager. He and his wife Cheyanne have a son Evan (Cub) and have another on the way!



Gary Peeples

Gary is a former Visitor Services intern from 1995 and is currently the Public Affairs Officer in the USFWS Asheville Field Office. He and his wife Molly have two daughters, Madeline and Cricket.



Mike Martin

Mike is a former General Refuge Intern from 1998/99. He is currently an Environmental Analyst for Haley and Aldrich, Inc. in Rochester, NY. He and his wife, Kelly, have three children, Garrett, Ruby, and Raleigh.

2016 Guided Interpretive Programs
Alligator River and Pea Island National Wildlife Refuges

Free Preschool Young Naturalist Program 10 - 11 am Year-round Fridays National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center, Roanoke Island	Free Saturday Red Wolf Howling October 8: 6 - 7:30 pm November 12: 4:30 - 6 pm December 10: 4:30 - 6 pm Meet at Creef Cut Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Highway 64 west of Manns Harbor). No reservation needed.
Free Pea Island Bird Walk 8 - 9:30 am June - August Wednesdays Year-round Fridays (except October 21)	

September 10	Saturday Tram Tours 9 am - 12 noon	October 8	November 12	No tram tour in December
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Join us for a trip around the refuge and learn about the wild lands and wildlife.

Bring your binoculars and camera!
Drinking water and insect repellent are also recommended.

Tram seating is limited. To guarantee your tram seats, you may register ahead of time. Those 13 years of age and older must pay \$10 per person. Children 12 and under may register for free with one or more paying adults. Call 252/216 9464 for reservations.

The program will occur except with lightning, heavy wind or rain, or impassable road conditions. Dress for the weather!

Co-sponsored by the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society.

Meet at Creef Cut Trail parking lot (Milltail Road and Highway 64 west of Mann Harbor).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to providing access for all participants. Persons needing reasonable accommodations in order to attend and participate should contact 252/216 9464. In order to allow sufficient time to process requests, please contact us at least two weeks prior to the event.

August Programs					
Program	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Meeting Location
Refuge/Wildlife Movies	9:30-3:30	9:30-3:30	9:30-3:30	9:30-3:30	National Wildlife Refuges Visitor Center Roanoke Island
Turtle Talk	2:30-3:30 pm				Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
AR Canoe Tour \$(R)		9 am-noon	9-11 am	9 am-noon	Alligator River NWR Buffalo City Boat Launch
AR Van Tour \$(R)	7-9 am	7-9 am			Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot
PI Bird Walk		8-9:30 am		8-9:30 am	Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
PI Canoe Tour \$(R)		9-11 am	9-11 am	9-11 am	Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
Bird Adaptations		2:30-3:30 pm			Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
Bear Necessities		5:30-7 pm			Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot
Red Wolf Howling (\$)		7:30-9 pm			Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot
Bees, Bats, and Butterflies			2:30-3:30 pm		Pea Island NWR Visitor Center
Open-air Tram Tour \$(R)			8:30-11 am		Alligator River NWR Creef Cut Trail Parking Lot

All programs are free unless noted. \$-fee charged
R-Reservation required. Call 252/216 9464
For details, visit www.fws.gov/refuge/alligator_river/visit/guided_programs.html